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SUBJECT: IRAQI PRESIDENT MEETS WITH IRANIAN SECURITY
ADVISORS

Classified By: Regional Coordinator James Yellin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

This is an Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) cable.

¶1. (S) Summary: Jalal Talabani, President of Iraq and head of the PUK party, told RRToffs on January 11 that he had concluded an agreement with a delegation of Iranian security advisors whereby his home province of Sulaimaniyah would import fuel from Iran and Iran would turn over to Sulaimaniyah authorities three members of Ansar al-Sunna who had bombed PUK offices in 2004. Talabani also said that he did not want to stop the smuggling of weapons from Sulaimaniyah into Iran because the Kurds in Iran need the weapons. End Summary.

Talabani Meets with Iranian Security Advisors

¶2. (C) In a meeting with Regional Coordinator and RRT Officers at PUK headquarters in Sulaimaniyah City on January 11, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani confirmed press reports that he had met in Sulaimaniyah with a delegation led by the Deputy Chief of Iran's Supreme National Security Council the previous day. (Talabani issued a statement on his meeting with the Iranian Security Advisors saying that the two sides had discussed ways to strengthen political and economic ties between Iraq and Iran, and that he hoped Iran could play a role in the development of Iraq.)

¶3. (S) Talabani told RRToffs that the Iranians were holding in prison three members of the terrorist organization Ansar al-Sunna who were responsible for bombings in 2004 in Erbil which killed senior PUK officials. Talabani said the Iranian officials promised to turn them over to Sulaimaniyah authorities & within days and pledged to continue investigating and arresting members of Ansar al-Sunna. Talabani claimed that Ansar al-Sunna has no presence in PUK-controlled Sulaimaniyah province. (Note: Deputy Governor of Sulaimaniyah Jutiar Noori told Regional Coordinator on January 7 that cells of Ansar al-Sunna are in the province, but that these cells do not currently pose a security threat. End Note).

¶4. (C) Talabani said that an agreement had been reached with the Iranian delegation to import 1.2 million liters of fuel (kerosene and gasoline) each month this winter from Iran to Sulaimaniyah province. (Note: PUK Official Hewa Jaff told RRT PAO on January 12 that the PUK would have to distance itself from the January 11 security operation by Coalition Forces on an Iranian office in Erbil, in part to protect the fuel deal with Iran. End Note).

Smuggling Across the Iranian Border

¶5. (C) When asked about cross-border trafficking, Talabani replied that weapons are being smuggled from Sulaimaniyah province to Kurdish communities in Iran. &We do not want to stop this,8 he volunteered, because the Kurds in Iran need the weapons. Bafel Talabani, Jalal Talabani,s son and a PUK counterterrorism official, was at the meeting between Jalal Talabani and Regional Coordinator, and remarked that there is also smuggling of 7.62 mm ammunition and weapons from Iran into Sulaimaniyah province, but that most of the arms trafficking is in the opposite direction.

¶6. (C) Jalal Talabani also said that Iran was sending narcotics at virtually no cost across the border into Sulaimaniyah province, enticing unemployed Kurdish youth into substance abuse. Bafel Talabani added that this was an Iranian strategy for destabilizing the Kurdish region.
KHALILZAD